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No. 4] JANUARY, 1920 [Vol. XIV

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The Indian Interpreter

A Religious and Ethical Quarterly

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY
MADRAS ALLAHABAD CALCUTTA COLOMBO

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Annual Subscription (including Postage) ...	Re 1	0	0
Single copy	„ 0	4	0
Subscription in Great Britain	£ 0	1	6

The Indian Interpreter

No. 4] JANUARY, 1920 [VOL. XIV

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Punjab

THE evidence that has been given before the Disorders Commission in Delhi and Lahore during the last few weeks makes it evident that many things were done in connexion with the suppression of the Punjab disorders which are deeply to be deplored. These matters are in a sense *sub judice* at the present time, and it is earnestly to be hoped that the report of the Commission will do whatever is possible to redress wrongs that have been done and to heal wounds that may otherwise long rankle. All who are concerned for the future of India and for the relations between the various races in this land must await that report with the anxiety. It is not necessary, however, to await it in order to pronounce judgement on some of the acts of those in temporary authority. Every one who desires the best interests of India will support at such a time of excitement as the present the forces of law and order. At the same time there can never be either justice or good policy in acts that humiliate the people and that are bound, therefore, to be deeply resented. Methods which Mr. Justice Rankin suggested were methods of frightfulness can never produce any permanent order or tranquillity, and, if they are adopted in the interests of what is considered the prestige of the ruling race, they must be repudiated and condemned without reserve as wholly contrary to just Government and to the true spirit of British administration. We trust that the Government will have the courage to condemn such methods unsparingly where they are proved to have been adopted and will continue to pursue a policy of justice and conciliation.

That justice and conciliation are the policy that Great Britain desires to pursue in India is proved by the whole history of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform scheme. The report of the Joint Committee furnishes conclusive evidence that this is so. Undeterred by the clamours of reactionaries on the one hand, as by the outbreak of disorders in India on the other, the representatives of the British people have gone steadily forward with the plans for placing the power of guiding their own destinies in the hands of the Indian people. There is no appearance of Prussianism in those proceedings. Quite probably the passing of the Indian Reforms Act in the closing days of 1919 may be recognized as one of the most epoch-marking events of these eventful years. Much, however, will depend upon the use that India makes of the instrument that has been placed in her hand. If it is made use of to the full as an instrument of popular control and if the new Indian administration vindicates its right to exercise power by its efficiency, nothing will be able to stay the advance towards complete self-government. Once the popular will has an opportunity of effective expression through elected representatives, as should now be the case, that will inevitably becomes paramount and no barrier can long stand against it. It has, however, to be seen, on the one hand, whether the people of India have in any real sense a will that they can express, and whether, on the other, their representatives will prove themselves equal not only in capacity but in character to the immense task of Government.

The Reforms

With the passing of the old year and with our entry upon a new one there reawaken those memories and hopes, or, shall we say, those regrets and forebodings which must always, since he became aware of time and decay, have visited the soul of man. This is one of those 'deep moments when he probes himself,' and the exercise must at the present time be accompanied by many doubts.

Faith and the Future

Time drops in decay
Like a candle burnt out,
And the mountains and woods
Have their day, have their day;
But, kindly old rout
Of the fire-born moods,
You pass not away.

Not always kindly, alas, either now or in past days. The

same moods of hope or of uncertainty, of rapture or despair, that visited Gautama in his palace in the East and Marcus Aurelius in his palace in the West, visited Tukaram also in his humble home in Dehu, and visit us amid the rush and clamour of our modern life. To-day as then, what men seek is peace and a secure heart, 'strength unsevered from tranquillity.' Men everywhere alternate in a harassing perplexity between a futile agitation of soul and a dull lethargy and listlessness. So many are either absorbed in affairs with their 'sick hurry' or are 'sitting by the poisoned streams of life, waiting for the morrow that shall free them from the strife.' Poise of soul, the gift that has always been so deeply desired by the unquiet hearts of men, is what especially they have recognized and admired in Jesus Christ. He seems to have found the centre of equilibrium; He saw life steadily and saw it whole, and He lived as we so much desire that we also might live; quiet, strong, strength-giving. If we consider what the secret was of His inward calm, we find that it was His confidence in God. 'Have faith in God,' there is no exhortation that Jesus repeats more frequently as the cure of every trouble. His own trust was absolute. He had, no doubt, His alternations of uncertainty, such as all who are men must have. He said, 'When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith in the earth?' And counselled Himself and us to pray always so as not to lose heart. 'My heart is sad, sad even to death,' He said in the garden. But in all that it is men, not God, He has doubts about. Their hard hearts may long delay the triumph. 'That day and that hour knoweth no man, not even the Son.' It is out of man's evil heart that the fumes of darkness issue that make the length of the way to the goal uncertain even to Jesus. But what matter the way to the end, be it long or short, 'The end crowns all.' He sees the Son of man seated at God's right-hand of power. Even as He stands before enthroned injustice this vision is plain to His sight. The dust of the world may obscure much even to Him and make much uncertain, but it cannot obscure God. Behind and above all stands this strong certainty for Him and for all who can see with His clear eyes. To share in the certainty is for us the secret of tranquillity. It is the secret of perpetual youth.

Where so the fountains of peace abide,
Stayed is the passage of time and tide.

That is the testimony of Tukaram but where shall we find

'the fountains of peace' that we may bathe in them and have our youth renewed? As the years pass, if love dies along with them and our hearts grow old, if faith in spiritual things fades, then indeed life loses its spring, its savour. It becomes dull and spiritless. There is a bitter French saying that speaks of 'withering into the truth.' That is not possible. Faith in God, faith in spiritual forces, to that alone is revealed the secret of eternal youth. The angels, says the mystic Swedenborg, are ever travelling towards their spring time. It is because they abide by 'the fountains of peace.' 'This is life eternal, to know God and Jesus Christ.' Many a one has said and can say still to Jesus Christ what Miranda says to Ferdinand:

> 'Tis fresh morning with me
> When thou art by at night.

His presence can bring fresh morning to the world even in this dark hour, 'turning the shadow of death into the morning.' 'This is he,' says an anonymous saint of the early Church, speaking of the Eternal Word, 'who was from the beginning, who appeared as new and was found to be old, and is born at all times young in the hearts of the holy.'

'SO RUN THAT YE MAY OBTAIN'

One step more, and the race is ended;
One word more, and the lesson's done.
One toil more, and a long rest follows
At set of sun.

Who would fail, for one step withholden?
Who would fail, for one word unsaid?
Who would fail, for a pause too early?
Sound sleep the dead.

One step more, and the goal receives us,
One word more and life's task is done.
One toil more, and the Cross is carried
And sets the sun.

C. G. ROSSETTI.

FRANCIS XAVIER

By Margaret Macnicol, L.R.C.P. & S.E., Poona

Part II

If the veil could be lifted from the future for a moment, and we could see the exact number of milestones we have to pass upon life's road before the end is reached, what would be the effect upon our work? Would the fewness of their number startle us to greater earnestness, or would it paralyse our efforts by a sense of the necessary incompleteness of their results?

When Francis Xavier landed in Goa in 1542, only some ten short years were left him in which to do the work which has made him famous for all time, but even could he have known this, it is hard to see how those years could have been more crowded with passionate endeavour and unwearied striving than they were.

It seems superfluous for some of his devout biographers to have loaded his life with stories of fantastic miracles, when the spirit of his whole existence is the greatest miracle of all—for what more potent sign can there be of superhuman inspiration and superhuman love than a mortal man living daily and hourly in the spirit of self-sacrifice, steadily and unwearingly in spite of wounds to the heart and burdens of the flesh—looking 'not only on his own things' but also 'on the things of others'? And such for the ten years remaining to him was the life of Francis Xavier.

The Goa in which he landed was a strange, and, in some ways, terrible city of bizarre contrasts. The island had been conquered by the Portuguese under their great Governor, Albuquerque, thirty-two years before, and there the colonists lived, surrounded by luxury and splendour on the one hand, and by degradation destitution and disease on the other. To maintain his navies, and to increase the European population, Albuquerque had deliberately encouraged matrimonial alliances between the colonists and the native women—a policy which had

degenerated into the keeping of harems by the Portuguese merchants, and a general loosening of morals.

Such a state of things must have been most repugnant to the pure soul of Francis, but instead of cutting himself off from his erring fellow countrymen, he mingled freely with them, dined at their houses, and so influenced them that in a few months a notable improvement in morals took place and some of the worst abuses were remedied.

Francis' own lodging was in the hospital, full of the sick and dying disembarked from the European ships. Here he nursed the patients, heard their confessions, and slept on the floor at the foot of the beds of those who were dangerously ill, so that he might reach them quickly if they called. He spent barely five months in Goa at this time, but it sufficed to inspire life into the listless local clergy, to establish a system of religious instruction for many—children and adults alike—to start a theological college, to collect substantial help for the famine stricken, the lepers and the prisoners by house to house visitation, to win men and women to purer and nobler lives by personal influence, and to bring, as we have seen, spiritual counsel and bodily ease to many sick souls and bodies in the hospital.

And yet even saints have their limitation, not only of physical ability, but of spiritual insight. It comes as a painful surprise to read of Francis writing to the Pope, 'for a various assortment of indulgences for the Governor and his wife and others.' As Miss Stewart observes, 'What would he himself have done with such things?' A *carte blanche* to commit sin with impunity seems a strange boon indeed for this ardent soul to crave even for his most sorely tempted friends.

But Francis was Apostolic nuncio to the largest diocese in the world, and he had other work besides the reformation of Goanese society, badly though that was needed. At the end of September 1542 he set out for Cape Comorin to visit some Christians on the fishery coast to the north-east of that spot. Their story is a curious one, casting a strange light on the Portuguese methods of evangelization then in vogue. These pearl-fishers—Paravas—had been tormented by repacious Arab traders, and had at last gone to war with them. A Malabar Prince who had had relations with the Portuguese and had become a Christian, suggested to the Paravas a way out of their troubles, namely to become Christians, since if they did so,

the Portuguese would come to their help and drive away the Moors. So the Paravas sent a deputation to Cochin, where they were baptized, and a Portuguese fleet and some Franciscan monks came to the rescue of the pearl-fishers. The Arabs fled on their arrival and the monks came ashore, and baptized 20,000 Indians on the spot. The Franciscans, however, found the climate very trying and the conditions of life very hard, and soon left their converts to their fate, though the Government officials continued to send ships, for which protection they received handsome payment in pearls. Some young Paravas were sent for theological training however to Goa and Lisbon. The latter can have been no easy undertaking in those days! It was to help these abandoned Christians that Francis went south, and we read, 'the hamlets and villages along the coast were startled by the visitations of a white man . . . singing, as he walked with his three companions, strange songs in a strange tongue. Soon he was gathering round him all the babies and little children he could find, and sprinkling their faces with water and chanting over them some mysterious incantation, as he made the sign of a cross on their foreheads. This was what the white man had done eight years ago, and since then the Arabs had never come near, so the people brought their children to Xavier gladly.'

To St. Francis and his fellows this baptism meant the deliverance of these infant souls from eternal loss, and their enrichment with a dower of grace. Believing so, and loving children as passionately as he did, what wonder that the baptism of babies is so prominent both in his own ministry and in his letters of exhortation to his workers?

More questionable, even from the Jesuit standpoint, was his speedy baptism of older persons. In this his methods are 'akin to those first adopted in the reign of Constantine, when heathen converts began to pour swiftly into the fold. It was then that the training which had in earlier days preceded baptism began to be given after the rite.' That there were grave dangers in such a course is obvious to any thoughtful person—its advocates, ancient or modern, would claim that a definite, and all but irrevocable, break with former beliefs and practices makes adherence to the new religion easier—but it was certainly an added drawback in the case of Xavier's converts that by baptism in those days a native of India became a subject of Portugal, and a sharer in certain very real political advantages.

But it would be most unfair to represent Xavier as indifferent to the further education of his converts; on the contrary he laboured unceasingly for their growth in grace and knowledge. One fatal mistake he did indeed commit. He did not put into their keeping the Gospel writings themselves. For those who knew him well, he was himself a 'living epistle' of Jesus Christ, but they could not all be near him and his time among them was very short. How great his personal influence was we can judge from the story of one of his converts made at a later date in the Moluccas. This man, when threatened with a martyr's death by Muḥammadans, testified, 'I am a poor Amboinese with no learning: I don't know what it is to be a Christian, and I don't know what God is, but I know one thing which Father Francis taught me, that it is good to die for Jesus Christ. Because the father said this I can't become a Muḥammadan. If he had not said it, perhaps I would be fallen like some others, but thanks to that saying my heart is so fixed that it cannot accept any other faith or any law but that of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

But, in addition to forming such personal ties on these Francis worked hard at the language, and in a letter to the Fathers in Rome he gives the following illuminating account of his methods:

'I sought some people who knew both Malabar and our language. Then after many meetings and great travail we drew up a form of worship . . . . After having translated them into their language (the Creed, Commandments, our Father, etc.) and learnt them by heart, I went all through the place with a bell in my hand, gathering all the boys and men that I could, and, after having gathered them, I taught them twice each day; and in the space of a month taught these prayers, arranging so that the boys should teach their fathers and mothers and all the household and neighbours what they had learned in the school. On Sundays I gather together all the folk, men and women, old and young, to say the prayers in their language; they seem very happy, and come with great joy. We begin with the confession of one God, Three in One, with loud voices repeating the Creed in Malabar, I saying it first, and then they all repeating it. When the Creed is said, I by myself go over it again article by article, treating each of the twelve separately. . . . Those who are about to be baptized say the General Confession, then the Creed. At each article I ask them if they believe it firmly, and when

they answer yes, and when I have explained to them the law of Christ which must be kept unto salvation, I baptize them.'

Of his own way of living at this time, we read that he took only one meal a day, consisting usually of badly cooked rice and badly seasoned fish with sour milk to drink. During this meal a crowd of the children he loved so much were always about him, and however tired he might be after his many wanderings (which were on foot we must remember) he always had a lesson for the boys at night. A large part of his nights was spent in prayer. He even occasionally used the children as missionaries, for when he was overwhelmed with calls to visit the sick he ordered 'the children who know the prayers' to go to the invalids' houses, repeat the Creed and say the prayers for them.

Francis had to return to Goa for a short time, but he was soon back at Cape Comorin, where he found many trials awaiting him. Worst amongst these was the rapacious conduct of his own fellow countrymen, who came seeking gain and upsetting the whole country-side with their cruelty and dishonesty.

A wild tribe of horsemen from the north too harrassed the Paravas cruelly, and Francis' next work was to organize relief for starving refugees who had fled from these marauders.

Francis' next field of work was Travancore which he visited at the request of the Rajah. This potentate wished help from the Portuguese, and was quite willing to secure this by handing over the out-castes among his subjects to this passionate fisher for souls. 'So, for one month, Francis ploughed and sowed, with unprecedented and titanic energy. It was the rainy season, and he went barefoot from village to village, his tunic in tatters and his old black hood a lamentable thing to see. Before the month was ended he had baptized ten thousand persons, and to each one he baptized he gave a new name, written on a piece of paper.' This piece of paper came to have a political as well as a spiritual significance. It was a kind of passport, and gave the bearer the rights of protection due to a Portuguese subject. . . . Enthusiastic crowds destroyed the idols and the temples. Churches were hastily built, and rude crosses placed there. The Macuas spoke the same language as the Paravas, so Xavier had no difficulty in teaching them the Catechism and the Creed. In reading this astonishing account we must bear in mind that the Rajah had publicly proclaimed Francis as the Great Priest, and ordered his subjects to

show him the same obedience as they showed to the Rajah himself.

But soon Francis' eager soul was yet again craving fresh fields in which to work for Christ. After a short period of retirement at San Thomé he set out for the farther East, stopping first at Malacca, where he worked chiefly amongst Portuguese and half-castes, and then going on to the Moluccas. Of his reasons for going there he writes: 'On the coast of Molucca is a place called Moro, sixty leagues away. In this island many years ago a great lot of people became Christians, but by the death of the clerics who baptized them they have been left abandoned and without teaching. The land of Moro is very dangerous, because its people are very treacherous and put poison in food and drink. So the people who should have looked after the Christians stopped going there. On account of the need of those Christians of Moro for spiritual doctrine, and their need of some one to baptize them for the salvation of their souls, and also on account of the need I have of losing my temporal life to succour the spiritual life of my neighbour, I determined myself to go to Moro.' The people in some parts were cannibals of a most degraded type. The history of the political relations of these islands with Portugal is a sordid and revolting record of treachery, crime and violence on both sides. Small wonder that the missionary work already done there had been overthrown. Yet Francis calls these blood-stained regions, 'Islands of Hope in God.' He wrote down an elaborate exposition of Christian teaching in the Malay language—which was generally understood—and had it taught throughout the islands, and he also took back twenty young natives with him to be trained in the college at Goa.

It was at this period that Francis first heard of Japan from some Japanese merchants, and his invincible optimism at once saw in it a land likely to be speedily won for Christ. He returned to India, and while waiting there wrote a letter to the King of Portugal which reveals a depth of depression, startling in one usually so uplifted by hope. The godless life of the Portuguese colonists, the oppression and injustice permitted by the Governors, were, as he plainly saw, the greatest hindrances to the spread of Christianity in India, but the remedy suggested might well take away the breath of a modern missionary working under a government pledged to religious neutrality: 'Owing to the fault of the governors so few Christians are being made in India . . . and if he (the Governor) do not greatly increase

our holy faith, assure him that you are determined to punish him, and say with a solemn oath that you will hold all his estates as forfeit for the works of the "Santa Misericordia" when he comes to Portugal, and further, that you will keep him in irons for many years, giving him plainly to understand that no excuses will be accepted. . . . So long as the governors have not this fear before them of being dishonoured and punished, you need not count on any increase of our holy faith. . . . I am thinking that I will (go to Japan) for I quite despair of any real chance in India for the increase of our holy faith.' Francis' proposals were not accepted—he had scant hope that they would be—but they reveal the weakest point in his character and policy, his tendency sometimes to fight the battles of righteousness with the weapons of evil, namely, physical force and diplomatic cunning. Willing for himself to cast aside every worldly advantage and depend utterly upon God, for the cause of God's kingdom his faith was not always so brave nor so simple, and herein lay seeds of much future evil. We must, however, carefully observe that the methods of force he advocates are not to be applied to the hoped for converts, but to the Government authorities to oblige them to afford the non-Christians opportunities of hearing the word.

He next visited his converts in the south, where things had not been going well. One thing that determined Francis to leave India and go to Japan was the hope that the people of the latter land might be able to carry on by themselves and for themselves the Christian work he and his friends might originate. This hope he had ceased to entertain for India. Of his Indian converts he writes, 'Christianity will last among them only as long as we who are here or those whom you will send from home will last and live. The reason for this is the great persecutions suffered by those who become Christians,' (persecutions from Moors, Jews and unfriendly Portuguese) of which it would take too long to tell. Rather a premature conclusion perhaps for a man who had only then spent seven years in the East, and not all of these in India.

Before starting on the perilous voyage for Japan Francis wrote once more to the King of Portugal in tones of the most solemn warning.

Three clever and hopeful Japanese youths had been studying at the college in Goa. These Francis took with him, one of them especially, called Paul, proving a most devoted and able

helper. He had also two Portuguese companions, and these three Europeans were the first Europeans who ever penetrated into the interior of Japan. They sailed in a Chinese boat, and suffered much from the superstitious hesitancy shown by the Captain about going on to Japan—the idol that he carried with him, and which he consulted constantly, having advised against this course. However, when he had determined to winter in China, the proximity of pirates, and the direction of the wind sent him after all to Japan—much to Francis' joy and triumph. They reached Kagoshima in August 1549, where was the home of the Japanese youth Paul. His conversion to Christianity proved no hindrance to the saints' welcome; on the contrary, through his introduction, the Governor received Francis with great hospitality. Paul was an indispensable interpreter, and took great pains to teach Francis and the others Japanese; he also helped him to compose an exposition of the faith in that language. The first three months were spent in preparation, studying the language and the people. Francis' impressions of the latter were very favourable. He notes their preference for honour before riches, their contempt for gambling as dishonest, their monogamy, and the fact that a large proportion of them could read and write. He considered the laymen much superior to the Japanese priests in respect to morals. Thirteen months later, after a considerable number had been baptized, Francis went on to seek more fruitful soil—the goal of his journey being the Capital, Kioto. Travelling by sea was fraught with dangers from pirates, and in their land journeys too his companions had much to endure from cold, fatigue and hunger. We read of them preaching in the streets of cities, reproving sin with utter fearlessness, and becoming, through their travels, so disreputable in appearance that no one would house them. At last they reached Sakay, where lived a citizen to whom Francis had an introduction. He received them hospitably, and introduced them to a nobleman who was travelling to Kioto. The nobleman and his pages were carried in litters, but Francis and his companions ran behind with the servants. 'Never,' says Fernandez,' have I seen Francis so gay as on this occasion. He wore a Siamese hat. And thus *á galope* we covered the eighteen leagues which separate Sakay and Kioto. His reception there was completely disappointing. They could not get speech with the Mikado, all the land was in a state of war, and finally they had to return to Yamaguchi and from thence to Hirado. There Francis provid-

ed himself with some handsome garments—finding the people of Japan had no respect for a ragged preacher—also with a collection of valuable presents for the Davinio (dube) and a letter, hitherto unused, from the King of Portugal offering his friendship to Japan.

With these Francis returned to Yamaguchi, and by means of the presents obtained permission to preach, and to occupy a Japanese monastery as his headquarters. Thereupon work went on apace and many converts were made, some among them men of very high character and genuine devotion. Presently Francis left the community in charge of two of his European comrades and sailed for India—not intending to stay there, but to prepare for an expedition to China. This was at that time a closed land, and he proposed to open it by sending an ambassador from the King of Portugal to the King of China with rich gifts. The Governor at Goa approved of his plan, but while arranging for its execution Francis had much to do in setting in order the affairs of the mission both in Goa (especially in the college there) and in the southern stations.

In April 1552 Francis sailed for China, taking with him three companions—a Portuguese, a Chinese, and a Malabar coolie. The ambassador and also his rich gifts awaited him at Malacca. But here trouble arose. The Captain of the Fort opposed their project, apparently from jealousy, and forced the ambassador to remain behind, allowing Francis with his three friends to proceed unhelped.

In August they reached the land of Sanchan, a little west of Hongkong where foreigners were allowed to land. Those who ventured to the mainland of China courted torture and imprisonment of the cruellest, yet Francis determined to risk this, and bargained with a Chinese man to take him ashore to Canton in a small boat, hide him for a few days, and then place him with his books before the gate of the city. December 19, the day fixed for this dangerous adventure, passed, but no boat appeared. More days passed and Francis began to feel ill. At last he and his Chinese companion resolved to return to the *Santa Croce* the vessel which had brought them to Sanchan and which still lay off the island. On the evening of the 22nd they rowed out to her, and spent a night of much misery on board her, Francis suffering from the winter cold and being in a high fever. In the morning he determined to return to the land, and with the help of a friendly Portuguese trader reached the little

cabin in which he was living. According to the practice of those days he was bled twice, but the result was bad. He became delirious, and in his delirium used once more the Basque tongue of his boyhood. On December 27, he died—the last words his companions could well distinguish being some verses from the Psalms of David. So died an indomitable soldier of the Cross, passing gladly from a lonely and inhospitable foreign shore to the homeland of his spirit.

INDIA AND CHRISTIANITY

By the Rev. A. Duff Watson, B.D., Aberdeen

THE law which governs a nation's evolution makes intercourse with its neighbours or with other people a necessity, if its character is to be fully developed. The growth of India's civilization has been checked partly by the isolation caused by the mountain barriers on the north and north-west and because she had received from Asia all that Asia could give. As the result of intercourse with Europe India is now pressing forward to her place amongst the nations of the world.

This is the story which is told in two very interesting and instructive volumes by a French author, *Essai sur l' Evolution de la civilisation Indienne. Mis de la Mazelière.*

In the days of very long ago Indo-Aryans, driven by restlessness or by necessity, having made their way through the passes of the north-west mountain barrier of India, subdued or drove before them the people who at that time occupied the Punjab, took possession of their land, and eventually made their way to the heart of the country. They brought with them a religion, a language, and in order to preserve the purity of their own race they devised the system which is known as caste.

Thus what was at first a social or civil system gradually secured a religious sanction, and it is still the essential feature of what is popularly known as Hinduism.

Hinduism from the earliest times has been characterized by syncretism which enabled this system to assimilate any form of religious worship or teaching which was not impatient of a rival (including many of the aboriginal animistic observances) so that, in spite of changes introduced by later invasions or the emergence of religious movements in India, caste has remained and is still the outstanding characteristic of Hinduism. Further, Sanskrit ceasing to be the language of every-day life, the Brahmin caste, proscribing instruction in that tongue to any but a Brahman, became the custodiers of the sacred tongue and of

the ritual in that tongue, and, by degrees, the premier caste in the land.

The Muhammadan invasion and conquest brought the teaching of Islám to India and by its stern condemnation of other faiths and the preaching of the unity of God caused India to become more definitely monotheistic. It might be truer to say that as a crystal if dropped into a solution causes the precipitation of the crystals held in that solution, so the stern proclamation of one God by Islám gave definiteness to the belief in the one great God which has struggled to gain acceptance and a recognized position in the Hindu system through the ages.[1]

The passing of the great Muslim rulers left India a prey to anarchy and very poor. There was no hope of new life coming to India from its neighbours in Asia, for they were decadent. If there was to be any further development of India's civilization there must be an infusion of new life, which could only come from the West and the only nation that could really help India at this time was Great Britain. The advent of the British brought many new ideas to India and the Christian religion. The influence of Christian teaching and example is thus described :

'Among the educated classes the influence of Christianity has been indirect and in many cases has produced a transformation in ethical belief and social conduct as complete as could have been wrought by open conversion.'[2]

In the *Student Movement*, March 1, 1919, Frank Mayadas writes: 'It is true that the caste system has long outlived its original purpose and use and is a hindrance to India's progress'; again, 'this ancient caste system is now steadily, I may almost add rapidly, losing its hold on India wherever good education and travel has opened the eyes of the people.'

Thus a great social transformation, the great problem which India has to solve, is in progress. What then is to be the controlling influence or check upon unrestrained individualism to prevent the issue in anarchy.

An Indian writer says: 'New life must be breathed into Indian society.' In this respect India takes her place among all nations, all need this new life. Christ declares His purpose in these words, 'I am come that they may have life', while the New

[1] NICOL MACNICOL: *Indian Theism*.

[2] J. D. ANDERSON: *The Peoples of India*, p. 105.

Testament speaks of progress towards completed character in the power of Christ as the aim of the Christian life.

But Mazeliere considers the conversion of India to Christianity a hopeless expectation because caste stands in the way, government neutrality in western education makes for secularism, and Hinduism has assimilated all that Christianity has to offer.

Chailly, another French writer, sees in the contrast between the principles and practice of professedly Christian peoples from the West a fatal bar to the advance of Christianity in India.[1]

The author already quoted considers the modern theistic movements in India an 'effectual bar to the spread of Christianity among the educated classes in Bengal.[2]

Is the Gospel message which our Lord brings not for India? His own belief hardly sustains that conclusion. Take one illustration John x. 16.

'And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.'

This simple illustration taken from common life reveals God in quite a new attitude to man. Christ speaks of Himself as seeking in His own Person to bring salvation from the thrall of sin by fellowship with Himself within the reach of all mankind. This must in the circumstances be done through others. The thought shifts the central conception of religion, as Christ understood it, from the service of self to that of service of others; man in this way becomes a fellow-worker with God. It is well-known that even in games that man serves his side best who forgets himself in the interest of his side. 'Men's best efforts are always then made consciously or unconsciously for others.'

To bring new hope to the hopeless who are only too keenly aware that they owe their failure in building their own character solely to their self-will or sin; to inspire the faint hearted with courage to rise and try once more to escape from the bonds of the habits which they have willingly formed; this is the ambition of God as Christ makes that purpose known in this beautiful simile of the shepherd call. As shepherd He leads the

[1] *Administrative problems of British India*, Joseph Chailly (tr), p. 90.
[2] *The Peoples of India*, p. 95.

way, and because of His deep interest in, love for, and confidence in, man He faces all that this new effort demands of Him, and as He knows that man cannot rise and come back to God in his own strength, and there is no other way possible, 'He carries through at infinite sacrifice the work of man's redemption.' And by so doing He reaches man's heart. 'We love because He first loved.' As one writer[1] says: 'It is plain God begins His work at the heart; then the inspiration of the highest giveth understanding.'

Now this truth is not a discovery made by any special nation; least of all can it be claimed as a discovery made by any people in the West, for a European Christ never existed. The message comes unsolicited by us, as a new doctrine, and it is in consequence bitterly resented and resisted at first. It comes always to any people who hear it for the first time as foreign; man has not devised this truth, it is only heard when the word of God or a spoken message brings it to others. Christ here reveals this gracious purpose of recovery as the end and purpose of His mission.

Moreover when He made the message clear to His disciples He warned them not to be amazed or disheartened if they were not readily received. And the objection which is at first uttered against the Christian message is as old as the first effort to make it known. It is long since the messengers of Christ were denounced as 'men who set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive or to observe, being Romans,' as 'men who turned the world upside down.' All that this objection indicates is that those who make it are very human.

By this gracious message Christ saves us from hopeless pessimism either in regard to our own great need or to that of our fellowmen, by bringing to our notice this reasonable basis for new hope and new life through fellowship with God, who cares so truly for us, and who teaches us to call Him 'Our Father'. We are not consulted as to how long we are to live in this world, Christ never finds fault with any one for being alive, but we are responsible for the use we make of this message. He brings us this fresh opportunity of living and doing our best. Apart from the revelation made in Christ, a fresh opportunity as a rule results in the discovery made long ago, 'To will is present with me but to do that which is good is not.'

[1] Wesley's Journal, *Everyman*, ii, p. 100.

The shepherd call therefore is a pledge of success for those who know that in their own strength they have failed. 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus for it is He that shall save his people from their sins.' We are in this way assured of victory over the rule of self-will, which is sin, as we make use of the strength which God gives us in Christ. The life of Christ further shows that this victorious life can be lived in this workaday world of ours by a poor man in humble circumstances. From that life we learn that man's capacity for the friendship of God is real, that God desires man to enter into this fellowship with Himself by faith in Christ, and that the consummation of this friendship is the defeat of sin with all its dreadful charm. 'Because I live ye shall live also.' The proof of this is seen to-day in the life of the devoted followers of our Lord, in any land where this message has been made known.

It has further to be noted that this promise of victory, of self-conquest, through the power which is given us in Christ is, and can be, proved to be true only by practice. 'My sheep hear my voice and they follow me.' Practice begins with a 'moral surrender to the will of God and strenuous endeavour to embody that will in life.'[1] This is the method specially chosen by our Lord as the final and sufficient test of the truth which He proclaims. Without doubt this proving is the work of a lifetime, yet those who have made the trial have found it valid. As Dr. J. R. Mott says, 'I have yet to find the man who failed who trusted Him.' It is surely only fair to make full proof of His claim in this the only satisfactory and convincing way. Is it not true that 'when one has given a great value no opportunity to make its own legitimate impression he cannot wonder that the sense of its reality and significance is wanting?'[2]

One of the first things that our Lord as a teacher had to do was to correct men's thought of God, to moralize their thought of God, in order to show the intimate and necessary connexion between theory and practice. In this direction He succeeded by showing the Jews from their own Scriptures that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. He cannot but condemn sin while He seeks to save the sinful. There is no other system of thought that paints man so deeply as he is, there is none that paints man as he is meant to be in such radiant colours. This

[1] Henry Churchill King, *Seeming unreality of the Spiritual Life*, p. 115.
[2] Ibid., p. 113.

message, 'the broken order' of man's: making notwithstanding, is the burden of the message delivered by the Church of Christ.

To readjust the relation between God and man in Christ by the example and power of Him who in teaching and practice has made God known. Moral character is built upon this true thought of God acting as a leaven in all conditions of life. 'I have given you an example.' No individual and no nation has ever exhausted in practice the transforming power of Christ, 'Man has outgrown the prophet; he has never made up upon or passed Jesus Christ.' At the same time the truth of the message of Christ 'is authenticated by its ever-widening area and deepening influence upon its adherents.' No cunningly devised fable, nor hallucination, has ever made better characters. The incidence of the great war is no proof that Christ has failed. What has been proved completely is that Christ alone can safeguard the World's peace, when His rule is recognized welcomed and obeyed by man. On the other hand, when He is rejected and His rule is disowned the character of the nation suffers through this individual failure.

The one flock to which our Lord refers involves the contribution of each people and nation as the message of Christ comes home to them. No nation is left out of the purpose of God and we seek by obedience to our Lord's purpose of making Him known to gain for Him this considered interpretation of His character and message from India. As has been said: 'The Asiatic cannot be a good European; our influence may make him a mixture of bad European and bad Asiatic; only by the power of Christ, His Saviour as much as ours, can he continue to be a good Asiatic, enriching his life by means of what we bring, and resisting that in our influence which for him would be destructive.'[1]

Christ reveals a God who is readily accessible to each one that seeks him, whose purpose in making Himself known is gracious and India's own children have found the strength of His righteous love sufficient for their moral needs, and in trusting Him they enjoy a rest which otherwise they had never known.

[1] William Temple, *The Holy War*, pp. 7-8.

SAVONAROLA

By the Rev. J. C. Matthew, B.D., Poona

THE estimates of Savonarola are many and various. He has been treated as a religious impostor who pretended to have supernatural power; or as a saint whose only purpose was to exemplify and teach holiness of living. To some, he has appeared a harsh and narrow-minded fanatic; others have found in him, a sympathy almost divine in its tenderness. His life's work has been admired as a heroic effort to apply a lasting remedy to the evil of all time; it has also been denounced as the misuse of power of one not fit to wield it: the most common judgement passed upon his life's work is that it was the hopeless attempt of a dreamer to realize his visions.

That the views taken of this great Italian social and religious reformer should so conflict is largely due to considering him out of relation to the time in which he lived. If we would rightly estimate Savonarola's character and work, we must go back to Italy at the end of the fifteenth century. The evils he wished to correct—if indeed they are common to men in all ages—were those of the people he knew; the reforms he wished to introduce—however we might think of them if attempted now—were intended for the times in which he lived.

I. THE RENAISSANCE

(1) Its Secular Aspect

Savonarola was born at Ferrara on September 21, 1452. The Renaissance was then near its height. That movement which began in Italy, and afterwards spread to the rest of Europe, is not to be identified with the Revival of Learning. The renewed interest in literature—especially of ancient Greece and Rome—was not the cause of the rebirth of Italy, but rather one of its consequences. The Renaissance was life renewed after it had been sick unto death during the Dark Ages.

When the Roman Empire lost its power, the Northern Germanic tribes poured down into Italy; gradually they were incorporated with the inhabitants; a new language was formed for the whole peninsula; the fresh blood imported brought new life; so that, before the twelfth century, trade was pushed with the East, and Italy was once more the distributing centre of the commerce of Europe. It was a growing sense of national unity, along with the commercial prosperity of the country, which brought about the Renaissance.

Broadly speaking, the spirit of the times—the Renaissance spirit—expresses itself in the joy of living—the resolve to make the most of the present world without thought of the future. It was a refined sensualism, quite different from the coarse excesses of the later Roman Empire. It associated with itself the love of the beautiful: stately mansions in town and fair gardens and villas in the country; splendour in dress and elaboration of festivals and civic functions. To this love of what pleases the eye, we owe the wonders of art which the Renaissance has preserved from classic times and which were created by its own craftsmen.

Nor were the pleasures of the mind neglected. That the movement we call the Revival of Learning is associated with the rebirth of Italy, but shows how high an estimate the people of the country put upon life, and how thorough they were in its enjoyment. They were not satisfied with the indulgence of the senses. The intellect was also cultivated. A knowledge of literature and the power to appreciate its beauties were found essential in a man of good-standing. When Italy awoke to a new life of wealth and prosperity, opportunity was no doubt given to the sensual man to assert himself in all his savagery; but opportunity was also offered to the man of intellect and to the man of moral character, so that the Renaissance in Italy, while it has produced some of the finest literature and art in existence, has also given us some of the noblest characters in human history.

Savonarola was, no doubt affected by the stirring of life in Italy. His later writings show a wide knowledge of classical literature; and when he sets himself to refute pagan philosophy, he does so as one who knows what he is talking about. Ferrara, where his earlier years were spent, was a centre of culture. He studied medicine there under his grandfather, a distinguished physician of the town. He shared in the amusements,

not indeed whole-heartedly, of the young men of his own age. Before he definitely abandoned secular life, at the age of twenty-two he must have been in touch with the spirit of the Renaissance.

(2) Its Religious Aspect

Savonarola was naturally religious, and his mind was profoundly affected by the condition of religion in his country. Never, perhaps, had the Christian church reached a greater height of wealth and temporal power than it attained in the centuries of the Renaissance. Rome was the capital of a holy empire which extended over Europe, and to which kings gave obedience. Within Italy itself its political position was exalted and its wealth assured of the possession of wide territories.

The Church in Italy had a peculiar claim upon the affection of the people. Through the Dark Ages, after the fall of the Roman Empire, the Church was the only remaining authority, and its influence held the fragments of the empire together. It nursed Italy back to life again, and it was not merely the saviour of the body of the Italian people, but, because it preserved the literature of ancient Rome, it was also the quickener of the spirit which showed itself at the Renaissance.

The Italians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, had outgrown the tutelage of their mother. They thought and spoke and acted with an independence which shocked the more conservative among the religious-minded. Generally, they went their own way, enjoying life as they thought fit, without giving any heed to remonstrance. But sometimes, the wits could not refrain from making mock of the old nurse who forgot that they were no longer children. The novels of Boccaccio and Sacchetti are full of satires upon the ignorance and venality of the clergy.

Obviously, there were only two courses open to the ministers of religion: either to oppose the movement of the Renaissance and to perish in the attempt to suppress it, or else to yield, and to let themselves go with the tide. They chose the latter alternative. The joy of living infected the higher clergy as it did the laity. Indeed, they went even farther in sensualism than those to whom they should have been an example of pure and holy living. When Roderigo Borgia ascended the papal throne as Alexander VI, the Renaissance spirit reached its fullest expression, but the corruption of religion was at its lowest level.

How the elevation of Alexander VI affected Savonarola, we shall see later. As a young man of twenty-two he was in the midst of the influences which gave to such a priest the supreme control of spiritual affairs in his country. Ferrara was a pleasure-loving city, and he found no peace of mind in it. The thoughtlessness, not to speak of the licentiousness, of his companions jarred upon him. He was out of sympathy with his surroundings. It was in order that he might realize his ideal of a pure and holy life, that he renounced the medical profession and became a monk in the year 1474, in the monastery of San Domenico at Bologna.

II. SAVONAROLA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE RENAISSANCE

For the next eight years, we hear nothing of him. No doubt, within the shelter of the monastery walls, he was steeping his mind in sacred lore, especially in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Then, probably at his own request, he went on a mission to his native town Ferrara. If he had expected to turn his former companions from the evil of their ways, he was disappointed. They had no use for religious ideals and despised them when presented by one they knew personally. This first mission of Savonarola was a failure. The same year (1482), however, he was sent to Florence, and his opportunity came. He took up the work which, although it was to end after sixteen years in a cruel death, has made him famous.

Florence was the real centre of the Renaissance movement in Italy. Dante had heralded it, and a succession of literary geniuses had extended his influence if they did not realize his aims. But Florence did not rest its greatness upon its intellectual productiveness alone. It was commercially one of the richest cities in the Peninsula. While Venice and Genoa drew their wealth from trade with the East, and Milan became powerful as the distributing centre of goods conveyed to Northern Europe, Florence had a constant source of revenue in its cloth manufacture. It produced wealth by its own industry; its merchants became money-lenders to the rest of Europe. With such resources within itself it was the patron of art and literature. Its rich men vied with one another in the collection of statues, paintings and manuscripts. Nor were they ignorant men, who gathered such treasures merely because it was the fashion, and because they had money to spend. Some of them were

distinguished men of letters, and the poems of Lorenzo de Medici—known as 'the Magnificent'—can still be read with pleasure.

It was a gay and pleasure-loving city when Savonarola came to it in 1482. The power of the Medici family was then at its height. By their wealth, and still more by their skill in disguising absolute power under the semblance of a republic, they kept control of the affairs of the city. It was part of their policy to keep the people amused and in good humour; and in this they certainly succeeded. Festival days and holidays were made as frequent as possible, for which Lorenzo the Magnificent did not think it beneath his dignity to compose merry songs. Extravagance in dress and luxury in eating were encouraged. The city was infected with the pagan resolve to enjoy life so long as it lasted.

(1) Savonarola A Religious Reformer

We may imagine how the frivolity of Florence vexed the soul of Savonarola. He could not pass through the streets without seeing vanities, and even within the convent of St. Mark's his ears were offended of the mirth of keeping holiday.

In the year following his arrival from Ferrara in 1483 he preached during Lent in the Church of San Lorenzo. His utterances, however, produced no impression. The Florentines were not then in the mood for a religious revival, and Savonarola did not obtain their favour as an orator. His appearance was strange, his language unadorned and his voice harsh. He gave up the attempt to reform the public generally and devoted himself to raising the standard of faith and conduct within his monastery.

In the year 1484, he went to the North of Italy (Lombardy) and remained there till 1490. It was during this interval that he developed his power as a preacher and established the fame with which he returned to Florence. There is reason to believe, however, that at Florence, he had found his inspiration and determined the form which his message was to take in future. While in St. Mark's he had seen visions, and had startled the brethren with his interpretations of the New Testament Apocalypse. On this line he advanced further while in Lombardy, specially interpreting the prophecies of the Old Testament to show that divine judgement was about to come upon Italy. In the city of Brescia—one of those grim frontier towns round which the waves of war

were always dashing—his announcement of woe to come—near as it was to the horrors of a siege not long past—produced a profound impression. When he returned to Florence in 1490, his reputation had preceded him, and multitudes crowded to hear his lectures in the garden of St. Mark's.

In the year following his return (1491) he was elected Prior of St. Mark's. The authority he exercised over the brethren, we may believe, was somewhat strict. We hear of him clearing out all the useless inmates, while those who are permitted to remain are kept under rigid discipline.

Savonarola did not at the same time neglect to encourage learning among the monks. He made St. Mark's a school for the study of oriental languages, and in his time it also became famous for its art. And, what was subsequently of great importance for himself, he obtained from the Pope practical self-government for his monastery.

In the same year in which he had been elected prior, he was invited to preach in the Cathedral of Florence. Crowds gathered to hear his sermons, and he was not slow to denounce the careless ease of the citizens and even to rebuke publicly those who came to hear him more richly dressed than he thought proper! His message was of judgement to come and he made liberal use of the prophecies of the Old Testament to show that it would come quickly.

From now on to his death, seven years later, he continued with short intervals to hold Florence in terror. And soon political events happened which lent confirmation to his claim to be himself a prophet and a beholder of visions. The French invaded Italy, and Florence was held to ransom. The Medici were driven forth and Savonarola, as the strongest man in the city, was given a free hand to carry out his reform of manners. He had succeeded in making St. Mark's a model monastery. Why should he not succeed in making Florence a pattern for the other cities of Italy? While preaching regularly and exhorting to repentance and good deeds, he organized the municipality so that religion entered into and determined civic life, its manners and customs. Hymns were sung in the streets instead of the light songs which Lorenzo had encouraged. Dress was simplified and rigorously ordained with a view to modesty. So grave and sombre did he make all social movement that his followers came to be known as the Prignoni, the Weepers. To assist him in carrying out his reforms he constituted the children of the city

into a regular police, charging them to snatch useless ornaments from passers-by on the streets, and to enter houses and remove all senseless objects of luxury. His zeal for reformation reached its culmination in the 'bonfire of vanities' when articles of personal adornment, instruments of music, pictures and books were gathered in the pile on the great square and solemnly burned.

(2) Savonarola as Political Reformer

The expulsion of the Medici placed Savonarola at the head of civic affairs and gave him opportunity to put in practice his theory of sound Government. Briefly stated, he included his demands under two heads: (1) Fear of God and purification of manners. (2) Promotion of the public welfare in preference to private interests.

Worked out in detail his scheme included much that was good and immediately beneficial; but also, by including much that was quite impracticable, he weakened his hold upon the people and overthrew the airy fabric of his vision. His measures for the relief of the poor were excellent. He provided free food; he reduced the taxes; he revived industry; but when he proposed that the Government should be carried on by 3,200 citizens of blameless character, he was making a demand far beyond the supply. The council of state which he formed—though at first wholly in sympathy with his measures—soon included members bitterly hostile; so that in time the majority were his enemies, and the very machinery of Government he had created passed sentence of condemnation upon him. His methods of interference with the personal liberty of the subject—above all, the inquisition of his police children—alienated the sympathies of the people. Before a pretence of justice was made in suppressing him, he had lost his hold upon men's hearts and there was no mercy for him.

III. SAVONAROLA'S FAILURE

Savonarola tried to stem the tide of the Renaissance. From the first failure was inevitable; it is not in the power of one man to reverse the course of human affairs. 'There is a tide in the affairs of men,' says Shakespeare, 'which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune'; but the monk of St. Mark's instead of leading forwards, sought to turn backwards. He would have had the pleasure-living people of Florence reproduce the monastic ideal which he and his brethren were keeping up within the sheltering walls of their monastery. For a time he seemed to

succeed, as the terror of judgement impended over his countrymen; but when the danger passed, life flowed on again in its accustomed channel. Prosperous Florence had no use for abstinence; intellect once free, could not for long be enslaved by undefined terror.

(1) Religiously

Had Savonarola gone forward with the tide of the Renaissance, and breathed into it something of his religious earnestness, he might have accomplished much. Italy was ready to receive a spiritual religion. The corruption of the Church under Alexander VI had alienated many earnest minds from the formalities of religion which yielded no fruit unto righteousness. But Savonarola had no message for them. The reformation he proposed was just as formal. He wished to impose upon the Florentines a discipline almost as harsh as the rule of his own monkish order. This he was prepared to carry through by force where exhortation was not sufficient. His action in putting to death five leading citizens who had plotted for the restoration of the Medici may have been strictly just; but it was done with such a cold devotion to his theory of good government, that it cost him the sympathy of the people and largely contributed to his ruin.

His attitude towards the Papal Court of Rome was stern and unbending. Therein we cannot but admire his courage. When Alexander, who could not understand the nature of the man he had to deal with, offered him high rank in the Church as a bribe to silence, he put aside the temptation with scorn. When summoned to Rome to answer charges made against him, he refused to appear. Herein, it must be admitted, he was in error. He had made, before God, vows of obedience to the superiors of his Church and he was in duty bound to answer the summons. But he went even a step further. Realizing the impossibility of obtaining justice from the ecclesiastical court, he appealed by letter to the sovereigns of Europe to undertake the reformation of the Papacy. This was open rebellion against the authority to which he had submitted when he became a monk. One of these letters was intercepted and given to Alexander VI, who excommunicated his contumacious vassal and condemned him to death as a heretic. Again, Savonarola's own weapons had turned against himself. He sought to reform the papacy—as he had tried to purify Florence—by forcible means. He found that in his own Church he had to deal with a force stronger than any he could bring to bear upon it.

(2) Politically

If Savonarola was ineffective as a religious force much more complete was his failure politically. He was at best a dreamer, though pure and unselfish in his motives. For him Florence was to be a city of saints. It was in reality very far from being that, and when he tried to carry through his measures, the ship of his hopes was wrecked upon rocks which a more worldly-minded man would have seen and avoided. It was manifestly impossible to keep the council of state perpetually supplied with 3,200 citizens of blameless reputation. His enemies crept in to make up the number, and the machinery of Government he had contrived fell to pieces under his hands. He did not calculate that the terror he had inspired by his prophetic utterances would wear off when the danger had passed. When indifference reasserted itself, he was unprepared to meet it. He had not really breathed his spirit into the body politic. His own earnestness of conviction found little or no echo. The kingdom of God which he had planned for Florence passed away. The Medici were restored and Florence returned to its old ways.

IV. THE LESSONS OF HIS FAILURE

The two men who have made Florence most famous are Dante and Savonarola. At first sight there could not be a greater contrast than that which they present to one another : the poet who finds his soul's rest in contemplation of the divine government, and the prophet made restless by the terror of judgement to come; the layman who had lived and loved and knew the world ; the churchman, who had never been young, and who was at heart a monk before he assumed the cowl. Dante closes the Middle Ages; and by self-assertion in his thought marks the coming on of the Renaissance. His was the spirit of independence towards the world which made possible for him its fullest, most refined enjoyment. This joy of living was just what Savonarola objected to, and it was his endeavour to make life as gloomy as possible. From this point of view, the two men are at the opposite poles: the poet pointing forward to individual liberty and enlightenment; the prophet pointing backward to the bondage of fear and the Dark Ages of ignorance.

And yet these two men have this in common that they were both dreamers of dreamers and seers of visions. Dante, no less than Savonarola, had his ideas of what perfect government should

be; and in his Latin treatise on monarchy he drew up a scheme for the lasting benefit of Italy. When he held power in Florence, he put into execution his stern convictions of justice, and his action in condemning impartially the heads of contending parties is closely parallel to the course followed by Savonarola.

Fortunately for Florence, and also for Dante himself, the poet was not given an opportunity of putting his plans into operation. He was driven from his native city, and his vision of perfect justice was transferred to the world of spirits where divine power reigns supreme. Unfortunately for Savonarola, and also for Florence, the prophet was given an opportunity of putting his theories into practice. When the Medici were driven out, the work of reforming the constitution was thrust upon him. He undertook it apparently willingly enough, and we have seen how he failed.

(1) Savonarola Ignorant of Real Life

Not only was Savonarola out of sympathy with the joyous spirit of the Renaissance, he was out of touch with real life. He abandoned secular life at the age of twenty-two, and, if accounts of his earlier years can be trusted, he was never attracted by human companionship. Once inside the walls of a monastery, he had such opportunity of knowing the world as a monk has. His limited outlook appears in the way he treated Florence when given control of its internal affairs. He had reformed the brethren in St. Mark's; they had listened to his reproofs and admonitions, and had amended their ways. Why should he not do the same for Florence? The reason simply was that Florence was not St. Mark's. The prophet indeed received a respectful hearing, and when the terrors of a foreign foe were upon them, the citizens were disposed to be saints. But he soon lost their sympathy and support. Perhaps Savonarola over-strained his authority. The monastic discipline he imposed upon the city, above all his interference with the personal liberty of the subject, made for him many enemies even before the terror had passed and indifference had reasserted itself. Certainly his estimate of human nature was too generous. It was that of one who was acquainted only with men naturally religious, and who had further placed themselves under the vows of monastic obedience. When he asked for ,200 righteous men to help him to make Florence as the city of God, the supply was not equal to the demand. He had no idea of taking men as he found them and

trying to improve them by putting them to use. He would have his vision of what ought to be realized there and then.

Hence he missed his opportunity not only for Florence but for Italy. If, instead of trying to turn back the tide of the Renaissance, he had led it forwards, he might have accomplished great things for his country. For this movement, which included not only the joy of sensual living, but also the assertion of individual judgement and the right to think, needed some one to lead it and above all to give to it moral earnestness. Religion was not dead, but was weak and languishing for want of inspiration of life from within. Savonarola could hold men in terror, but he could not inspire them. He could not sympathize with men in their religious difficulties, because he did not understand human nature. He could be tender in his dealings with individuals among his brethren whom he knew; but he was harsh and fanatical towards men in general of whose circumstances he was in ignorance.

It was the geniality of Martin Luther which, more than anything else, restored to religion in Northern Europe its moral basis. By breathing something of his own spirit into his countrymen he roused them to undertake for themselves, from within, the reformation of the Church. Savonarola could not have done that even if he had wished. Indeed it never seems to have occurred to him. When he was no longer able to frighten people into good manners, he appealed to the secular power—the kings of Europe—to reform the Church from without. His own citizens delivered him up to the vengeance of the Pope against whom he was in open revolt.

(2) SAVONAROLA IGNORANT OF WHAT RELIGION REALLY IS

Savonarola made the mistake of mixing up religion with politics. We can understand his error in trying to enforce monastic discipline upon Florence. He had successfully carried it through among the brethren under his authority in St. Mark's. It seemed to him possible—when he was made supreme in the city—to put in operation the same strict rules of abstinence and self-restraint.

He was altogether wrong, however, and acted as a man totally ignorant of the world, when he made religion determine the form of political life. For, if religion is made to depend on some form of secular government, it is sure to suffer when that form, as it must do, changes. The body politic is constantly being modified as our civilization develops, and the dress of

legislation with which its nakedness is covered must be enlarged from time to time to meet the requirements of decency Savonarola staked his religious influence in Florence upon the continuance of a system of government which he himself devised. It was quite unworkable, it could not last; and when it fell to pieces, his religious influence perished with it.

Perhaps if, instead of demanding on the spot a supply of 3,200 men of blameless life, he had set about creating them, he would have done better. For the saying of John Stuart Mill is universally applicable, that the worth of a state is as the individuals composing it.

Religion is the best means of making men fit to take their place in the government of their city or of their country. But it must be the right kind of religion. What is required is not its formal expression, depending upon the observance of ceremonies or even vows of abstinence. That was all Savonarola had to offer. But what is wanted is a spiritual religion; which having made a man better inwardly, impels him to make the world without better for himself and for others. Such a religion itself undoubtedly is the origin and source of all movement. It is more than politics, for it conditions and determines the form which the constitution shall take. Had Savonarola been able to blend that with the movement of the Renaissance he might have accomplished great things and sent forward his influence into modern times? But he tried in vain to turn back the tide; and he remains for us a witness, noble, indeed, to a mistaken ideal.

TENDENCIES OF CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT [1]

By the Rev. N. Macnicol, D.Litt.

FIVE years ago I read a paper to this Club on Present Day Tendencies in Literature and in Life. That was before the war, and when one looks backward across that abyss it seems sometimes as if the change from then to now was immeasurable and complete. Especially while we were in the midst of the spiritual convulsions that the monstrous events of the war once and again wrought within us, it seemed as if a break had come in the world's development and things could never be again as once they had been. But, for evil or for good, the soul of man is of stubborn stuff, and even from that inferno men have come forth but little changed. As a matter of fact we find the present day tendencies of five years ago still present, but moving with far greater impetus than then because of the violence of the explosion which in the interval has occurred, and so revealing unmistakably their strength and their direction. We were aware five years ago that things were wrong, desperately wrong; 'the rose colour had faded out of the Victorian spectacles.' In my former paper I quoted Sir Henry Jones as saying, 'The spiritual waters have sunk very low, nay, they have been well nigh lost, but I think that the rains are coming and that springs will rise in the desert and that mankind will yet drink deep and know that God and nature satisfy.'

We trust that that hope will be fulfilled, but the time of its fulfilment is not yet. We know that when the rains break in this country it sometimes is with storm and tempest and destructive violence, and the violence is often greatest after long drought. So it has been here, and the one comfort that we have had in the midst of the thunderstorm is that it means, we believe, the end of famine and the coming presently of greenness and of harvest.

[1] A paper read to the Poona Literary and Philosophical Club.

It is the custom with many of us in our bewilderment and disappointment at the present to say hard things of the period that preceded it. The Victorian Age is charged with the guilt of having sown the secret vices and hypocricies from which we, poor innocents, are reaping the whirlwind. It is well, perhaps, in order that we may avoid that easy way of reaching a solution of our problem and of allocating guilt for the storm of evil that has burst upon the world, if I read to you an appreciation of the Victorian Age, made from the midst of the darkness of the war by one of its most distinguished representatives, Lord Morley. 'Whatever we may say of Europe,' he says, 'between Waterloo and Sedan, in our country at least it was an era of hearts uplifted with hope and brains active with sober and manly reason for the common good. Some ages are marked as sentimental, others stand conspicuous as rational. The Victorian Age was happier than most in the flow of both those currents into a common stream of vigorous and effective talent. New truths were welcomed in free minds and free minds make brave men. Old prejudices were disarmed. Fresh principles were set afloat and supported by the right reasons. The standard of ambition rose higher and purer. Men learned to care more for one another. Sense of proportion among the claims of leading questions to the world's attention became more wisely tempered. The rational prevented the sentimental from falling into pure emotional. Bacon was prince in intellect and large wisdom of the world, yet it was Bacon who penned that deep appeal from thought to feeling, "The nobler a soul is the more objects of compassion it hath." This of the great Elizabethan was one prevailing note in our Victorian Age. The splendid expansion and enrichment of toleration and all the ideas and modes that belong to toleration was another.'

These are great claims that Lord Morley makes for the age and I think that a strong case can be made out to prove that an age which possessed Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, Charles Darwin and T. H. Huxley, Tennyson and Browning and Meredith, cannot be dismissed as shallow and insincere. These men were not hypocrites nor purveyors of evil doctrine, but sincere teachers and interpreters of the truth as made known to them. But while we cannot frame an indictment against any age or unload the blame for our misfortunes upon our progenitors, it is possible to make out some of the influences and tendencies that have gone to create the strange and difficult world in which to-day it is our

lot to live. Every period, some one has said, condemns its members to the task of understanding it and without the effort to understand it we shall not be able to escape from what is amiss in it or to appropriate fully that in it which is precious.

G. K. Chesterton says somewhere that the most important thing to know of any one, whether it be the general we have to fight against or the landlady from whom we rent our lodgings, is what is his or her philosophy. Whether that be true or not of the individual it certainly is true of the age. It is to the poets and the philosophers we should go to find a clue to the real spirit and temper of any generation of men. In them the time becomes articulate. The poet is keenly sensitive to the mood of his environment. He is the Aeolian harp through which sound the prevailing winds of the time, whether they be airs from heaven or blasts from hell. The philosopher, on the other hand, is a pioneer anticipating the ideas towards which a blind world is groping, laying the foundations in thought upon which it, consciously or unconsciously, will build its action. Ideas are the hidden and subterranean forces that presently produce the revolution. 'The train is laid,' says Meredith, 'in the lifting of an eyelid, which bursts upon the field of thousands.' Carlyle expressed this with his usual vigour when he said that there was a man called Rousseau who wrote a book of ideas at which people laughed. 'But,' he added, 'the skins of those who laughed went to bind the second edition of the book.' It is well, then, if we are to understand our age and the direction of its movement, that we should know something of its philosophers and of the ideas that they teach.

I think it is true to say that the distinctive feature of contemporary thinking in the West consists in a reaction from Absolutism to what is called Realism, from Monism to Pluralism, a return from a region where ideas of the intellect reign to occupation with facts and things (pragmata) in their actual working. Absolutism had long held the field in philosophy. This intellectualist idealism conceived, in the words of F. C. S. Schiller, 'the essential function of intelligence as a static contemplation of "eternal" truths.' It was a view of things which not unnaturally accompanied the doctrine of evolution, the dominant conception of the Victorian Age. That age saw science after science organized into what seemed like complete systems. It was natural to view the whole universe as such a complete and rounded system also, and if there was no mind to which it was

known as such, the conclusion was that there must be an absolute mind to which it could be known. I do not intend to discuss this doctrine. It is sufficient to note that under absolutistic influences philosophy had largely lost its vitality. It had become an esoteric thing, concerned with ideas, with categories and not with the living, moving, changing world. Truth was a static thing. Now the new realism is a return to things, living things. It is an attempt to recover life and change as facts in the understanding of a world whose note is ever mutation.

I do not wish to deal with abstractions in this paper. I wish to see the operation of the ideas of the philosophers in the actual results they produced. I have said that intellectualism is, on the whole, the prevailing note of the period that is past. Its philosophy was an intellectual idealism in which reality is a system of relations; its science is severely and sternly rational. Comte and the men of science set themselves expressly to the uprooting of anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphic became a term of abuse like Bolshevist nowadays. That is why the intellect took such a high and solitary place in men's regard. It was because it seemed to be that in us which partook least of the passions and weaknesses of humanity. Some one—I think, F. H. Bradley—has spoken of Hegel's 'dance of bloodless categories.' It is just the bloodlessness, the anaemia of the intellect that commended it to that age. It seemed something refined and highly civilized and impartial.

Now the pluralist and the realist of to-day try to get down from that high, thin air into a world in which things really happen, and to know them. They believe that 'a truth remains at the heart of anthropomorphism which human knowledge never can make itself complete without.' The evolutionists of the Victorian Age believed that an iron law had got the universe in its grip and was bearing it on unwaveringly. They believed in 'one far off divine event to which the whole creation moved.' But the new philosophy sees no such set programme for the world. 'Before the evolution of life,' says Bergson, 'the portals of the future remain wide open. It is a creation that goes on for ever in virtue of an initial movement. This movement constitutes the unity of the organized world, a prolific unity, of infinite richness, superior to any that the intellect could dream of, for the intellect is only one of its aspects or products.'

The notable contribution of Bergson to current thought is, as we all know, his doctrine of the living force ever surging up

in the midst of things, dominating intellect and all else in man and carrying him forward to a future that cannot be foreseen. This power is something, he says, 'essentially active, I might almost say, violent.' Philosophy does not consist in watching things evolve to a sure end, 'as a sleepy shepherd watches the water flow.' But at the same time his and the realists' distrust of reason, which is the architect of ideas, involves that they have no principle of construction in their thought. They are pluralists. They like to leave things lying about. They distrust systems since they distrust the pure reason.

Bergson then, if he truly represents current tendencies, represents a tendency to turn away in politics or in ordinary living from action which is rational to action which is instinctive and blind. 'Those to whom activity without purpose' says Bertrand Russell, criticizing Bergson, 'seems a sufficient good, will find in Bergson's books a pleasing portrait of the universe. But those to whom action, if it is to be of any value, must be inspired by some vision, by some imaginative foreshadowing of a world less painful, less unjust, less full of strife than the world of our every-day life, those in a word whose action is built upon contemplation will find in this philosophy nothing of what they seek, and will not regret that there is no reason to think it true.'

'Action without purpose'—does not that seem to describe much of the movement of upheaval of the last few years? Intuition, passion, the non-rational elements in man's life have come tremendously into their own and the Victorians' faith in reason and in 'progress broadening slowly down from precedent to precedent' has been tragically dethroned. There are certainly other things in the world that are powerful besides categories of the understanding and they are not bloodless. Bergson so far is right and the comfortable idealists of the intellect were blind leaders of the blind. But if Bergson has pointed out the headlong way by which we are travelling, is he able to do more than that and to lead us into some happier land? Or is his teaching after all only an interim philosophy and is it a less safe guide even than that which it has displaced? Indeed, to tell the truth, it does not attempt to guide at all. It has no prevision. It only tells us that there is a powerful force in the world that we have hitherto been blind to. If he goes further and bids men trust this vital impulse in them and follow it to action, he is becoming a danger to society. Intuition is neither good nor evil in

itself. Other tests must determine its value. The Syndicalists, it seems, claim that they are carrying into effect the teaching of this new philosophy. They are asserting by their demand for action at all costs in the social sphere the claims of instinct as opposed to a discredited reason. Sorel says quite candidly, 'I cannot tell you what is going to happen, I am mainly interested in getting action . . . You need not necessarily act wisely, but in the name of everything you hold good and dear, act.'

Those who follow this leader cannot away with the old Victorian intellectuals. The Victorians had an abundant spirit of philanthropy, but it expressed itself typically—as was to be expected in an age that we have described as dominated by the well controlled and complete system of Absolutism—in, let us say, the Charity Organization Society, which patched and doctored and trimmed an unruly world of evil-doers. The Syndicalists will have none of such methods as these. They would rather spend their energies in breaking the world to pieces, and they give no thought meantime at any rate to rebuilding it after their heart's desire. With Bergson's approval they would, as some one has described them, 'lie back on the running flood, spread their sails to the winds of God and await the grand catastrophe.' This is accordingly only at best an interim philosophy. The worship of an instinct is a worship of the indeterminate, and, while, so long as it prevails, as it seems to be prevailing now, it may make us all very uncomfortable, it must presently, man being what he is, make way for a new determination. The philosophy of to-day is, even more than philosophy usually is, tentative and incomplete. It must surely be on its way to something less transitional.

Bergson is not, technically speaking, a realist but an idealist. That is to say he concerns himself with what is within consciousness. The school of new realists who are having so great a vogue to-day differ from him in that they occupy themselves with what is externally given. Bergson and the realists, Bertrand Russel and the rest, agree in being interested, not in any ideal construction of the universe, but in what is given to man in experience. They differ in that Bergson tracks with immense subtlety the inner side of experience, while the realists are occupied with its outer aspect. They agree in their interest in the given, that which enters experience. They agree also in their opposition to construction, the formulation of systems. They are both anarchic, Bergson in his suspicion of reason, the realists

in their opposition to anything outside of, anything holding together, the immediately given. Thus the realists are interested in things in disconnexion. They, like Bergson, are the allies of those who break up the order and organization of the past. Bertrand Russell is an enemy of the state, because it is too big and too highly organized a thing. He wants to give room to the impulses of the individual life, to the individual's initiative, his individuality and energy.

Thus we see how both these philosophies, different as they are in other respects, are closely akin in the practical issues that they promote. They are both architects of anarchy. They both promote an unchartered freedom, an unwillingness to be bound by any bonds of reason or relation. But Bertrand Russell recognizes that man cannot rest there. He cannot be content to be the prey of chance desires, and at the last he calls in the aid of religion, but this is a machine made God of his and not likely to do the work he wants it to do. One of his critics makes in this connexion an apt quotation from Shakespeare's Henry IV. 'I can call spirits from the vasty deep,' said Owen Glendower. 'Aye, aye,' answers Hotspur, 'and so can I and so can any man. But will they come when you do call them?' Even to issue a summons to religion to come to his help seems to have been only a late afterthought on the part of Mr. Bertrand Russell. His system, if you can call it a system, has really no room for such embroidery. The world consists for him, as for Robert Louis Stevenson's child, of 'a number of things,' things vividly realized and feelings intensely felt, but discontinuous and with no idea of the whole to unite them and to inspire purpose or hope. The world is made up of a number of things but, alas, it does not follow that we should be as happy as kings. On the contrary; here is Mr. Bertrand Russell's account of the future of humanity as he envisages it. 'Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way. . . . All the labour of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of the universe in ruins.'

These two names, then, that of Bergson and that of Bertrand Russell, represent, it seems to me, the two most powerful

under currents of idea that are in large measure controlling the direction of contemporary effort and expectation. The philosophers make articulate the blind movements of man's spirit and reveal the governing principles in their lives of which they are themselves unaware. Bergson, on the one hand, presents the failure of reason to achieve what had been expected of it, and it is the more significant that he who does so is a son of intellectual ist France who thus breaks with the whole tradition of French philosophy. The new realists, on the other hand, represent a desire to get away from shams to immediately given realities, a desire so strong that they can see nothing and believe in nothing but the reality at the moment before their eyes. Bergson has opened to a great multitude of things, both good and bad, the gate which Reason hitherto had kept close shut to all except his own kin. Through it has entered Mysticism as a subject of engrossing interest, and through it has entered also superstition. Because a fact is, or seems, irrational, it is no longer barred out, as it would have been barred out by, let us say, T. H. Green or T. H. Huxley in the earlier age. The brain, Bergson's investigations make plain, is 'an organ whose function is not to cause consciousness but simply to control it,' and consciousness has wide and undefined boundaries. He would agree with the mystic A. E., when he affirms, 'My brain is a court where many living creatures throng . . . and what you thought was but a mosaic of memories is rather the froth of a gigantic ocean of life, breaking on the shores of matter, casting up its own flotsam to mingle with the life of the shores it breaks on.'

It is well that we have had our horizons inward so widened. Education is now realized, as it was not until recently, as something much more than a training of the intellect. Religion, too, must take account of much that is non-rational. There are many fears and hopes and desires that go to the fashioning of faith. Out of many dark terrors and crude superstitions has grown the body of aspiration and belief that is accepted as satisfying the whole man. *Nihil humani a me alienum puto*, is inscribed on the banner beneath which men adventure forth to-day to explore their spiritual possessions. Knowledge in every department has learned to include within its sphere of interest much that once would have been ruled out as unworthy of a place there.

One of the perils of this enlargement of that which is reckoned precious in human personality lies in the fact that

those impulses and uprushes of the soul from its dark places are especially powerful in the multitude. The intellect is individualistic; the other tempers of the soul belong especially to the herd and they too often drive the herd down steep places into the abyss. Emil Durkheim and the group of investigators associated with him, for example, find in 'collective representations,' in the facts of the social consciousness, the dominating force in all man's history, a force that overwhelms every argument of reason. The strength of these herd emotions are obvious and, from their strength, rightly guided, much power must come, impelling the race towards its goal. But 'rightly guided.' It is in the tendency to reject the direction exercised by man's higher powers that the danger lies. Herd instinct is neither good nor bad; it is simply part of the stuff of life, and a part full of dynamic possibilities. It is well that the deepest elements in life should be passionate, that the infection of common hopes and loves should stimulate the good in man, but the higher duties and aspirations must not be placed under the dominion of the lower, merely because these are stronger. We must not submit to this social fatalism. The way of progress after all is the way of instinct controlled, and not that of drift upon the stream of impulse. Reason is after all the eye of the soul and it must stand for individual freedom with its inhibitions, as against the rapture, the sense of enlargement that the followers of their impulses experience. It has 'to tame the blind dragon.' 'I suspect,' says Professor Gilbert Murray, 'that some modern adorers of instinct as against reason will in the end awake to disillusion like that of Caliban:

> What a thrice double ass
> Was I to take this drunkard for a God,
> And worship this dull fool.'

Again if we turn to the realists we realize that their influence is no more purely good than that of the intuitionalists. It is always a good thing to be brought back to realities from occupation with shadows and with shams. The Victorians had become so accustomed to the rut along which their lives had travelled that the vividness of realty had faded. They walked in a vain show, content to believe that things were well enough and were progressing satisfactorily on the whole. 'One good custom' was in danger of corrupting the world. So, to quote another great Victorian, there was need

to shake
The torpor of assurance from our creed.
. . . . to bring
That formidable danger back, we drove
Long ago to the distance and the dark.

The work of Bertrand Russell and his group, with, as their great auxiliary, war, has been to make a sleepy, easy age start up broad awake again and look at things, ugly as well as beautiful, with wide open eyes.

It would take far too long if I were to try to illustrate from literature with any fulness the return to reality which is so unmistakable and so hopeful a characteristic of the present time. We see this, for example, in the great influence exercised by the Russian novelists, especially Dostoievsky. Another example is to be found in the Irish Literary Movement called the 'Celtic Revival,' with its return to the peasant. Nowhere are men's eyes opened so clearly to reality as in the presence of death and perhaps the greatest and the simplest and truest utterance of this school is J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, in which pain and tragedy have shrivelled up as in a flame all but the truth of feeling, expressed in language of extraordinary directness. His characters, it has been said, 'talk with a straight forward and simple kind of innocency,' and he seems to see what he writes about with 'wise, clear-seeing, unreflecting eyes.' That is the realism upon which, and upon which alone, a great literature can be built, and we see it in many directions preparing the way, as we trust, for such a literature. It is only as yet preparing the way. There must be more than the clear apprehension of things seen before such literature can arise. There is not the architechtonic faculty in the new realists; there are not the large ideas, the grasp of the whole without which there cannot be a great literature. Their task is to prepare a way in the desert. Faith and the wide vision will come, we believe, on a later day. Meantime eyes to see with are the main thing.

Only a man harrowing clods.
In a slow, silent walk,
With a horse that stumbles and nods,
Half asleep as they stalk.
Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch grass;
Yet this will go onward the same,
Though Dynasties pass.

What strikes one about the Georgian poets is that, though none of them, perhaps, is very great, most of them are so clear-eyed and sincere. Sometimes they express a passionate desire for beauty, for the large aspects of peace, but in the world here, and especially in the world of war, they are in the midst of harsh, horrible, grim things that pass one after another, meaningless and unrelated. That is, I think, the impression that the work of these young poets makes on us, the work of Siegfried Sassoon, of Robert Graves, of W.W. Gibson.

> And then he thought; to-morrow night we trudge
> Up to the trenches, and my boots are rotten,
> Five miles of stodgy clay and freezing sludge,
> And everything but wretchedness forgotten.
> To-night he's in the pink; but soon he'll die.
> And still the war goes on; he don't know why.

But again on the next page:

> I am not sad—only I long for lustre—
> Tired of the greys and browns and the leafless ash.
> I would have hours that move like a glitter of dancers,
> Far from the angry guns that boom and flash.
> Return, musical, gay with blossom and fleetness,
> Days when my sight shall be clear and my heart rejoice.
> Come from the sea with breadth of approaching brightness,
> When the blithe wind laughs on the hills with uplifted voice.

It appears then to me that the thought of the present time, brilliant and powerful as some of its representatives are, is supplying us with no more than an interim philosophy. It may be said that this is what all the thinking of fallible men must be, but the transitional character of contemporary thinking is more manifest than is usually the case. We must surely be on the way to something more stable. In thought and literature, as in the life of the state, we are in a period of revolt and rebellion against established tyrannies. We are being awakened—and this war has been the terrible means of the awakening—to the realities of things, of things within surging with passionate impulsion, of things without, horrible or fair. The generation has been brought face to face with such things, so that they cannot shut their eyes to them any longer, and man is now, we trust,

> pale, resolute,
> Prepared to die, which means, alive at last.

It is the ugly things and the painful things that first draw our attention, but presently man will recognize more and more the beautiful around him and the source of all beauty above him. Let me conclude by quoting a poem of another of the young poets of the day, in which we see that renascence of wonder which will surely be to-day, as it was a century ago, the herald of a great outburst of creative literature.

What lovely things
Thy hand hath made,
The smooth-plumed bird
In its emerald shade,
The seed of the grass,
The speck of stone
Which the wayfaring ant
Stirs, and hastes on!
Though I should sit
By some tarn in Thy hills,
Using its ink
As the spirit wills
To write of Earth's wonders,
Its live willed things,
Flit would the ages
On soundless wings
Ere unto Z
My pen drew nigh,
Leviathan told
And the honey-fly;
And still would remain
My wit to try—
My worn reeds broken,
The dark tarn dry,
All words forgotten—
Thou, Lord, and I.

REVIEW

The Undying Fire [1]

MR. H. G. WELLS has recently turned his attention from forecasting the future of the race to solving the mysteries of life and destiny. Naturally enough, when he began to deal with God instead of with gramophones and flying-machines, his seriousness and his adequacy to the task he had undertaken were doubted. The manner of the shallow materialist is not easily exchanged for that of the high-browed thinker. He was not taken very seriously. The present reviewer recently heard a Christian preacher suggest this doubt as to his depth and seriousness by an amusing apologue. A little girl was drawing a picture when her mother asked her what it was a picture of. 'Of God,' said the little girl. Her mother explained that no one knew what God was like. 'Ah,' said the little girl, 'wait till I have finished, and then they'll know.' No doubt H. G. Wells is in a hurry to set the world right in its ideas of God. He is not a profound thinker. But at the same time, we must acknowledge the profound seriousness of his latest book, *The Undying Fire.* It was, perhaps, too courageous of him to suggest by the form of his book comparison with a book that reaches to such depths of human perplexity and despair as the book of Job, but we are willing to believe that he does so, not because of any mistaken notions of his own powers, but because he wishes to suggest that, whether in Arabia or in London, whether three thousand years ago or to-day, according as the fire of man's faith in God flickers or burns high, so is the meaning and preciousness of the life he lives. That is a great truth to believe and preach, and when H. G. Wells ranges himself among those who are fighting on the side of spirit, they must feel themselves notably reinforced.

[1] *The Undying Fire.* By H. G. Wells. (Cassell and Company, Ltd., London).

We know nothing of the nameless poet who, somewhere in the waste places of the Arabian desert, wrestled in the dim past with the problem of the ways of God with men. We only know that his reach is far beyond that of any of us to-day. No one nowadays can speak his great language or cast his plummet so deep into the dark places of the heart, but we may well be grateful, at the same time, to any one who translates these hopes and fears and convictions into our modern speech, and thus helps us to understand his argument and to share in his faith. He felt and he expresses with extraordinary passion doubts reaching 'to the very bases of the soul.' 'Like one sick who has been drawn into half consciousness by the entrance of some visitor, and utters a few words of seeming sense, but straight relapses and wanders again and soliloquizes with himself or speaks to some absent person whom the spirit deems near, Job is ever drawn into consciousness and contact with his friends; but speedily he turns round and they vanish from his sight; he is away, busy with another and a greater, remonstrating with Him, chiding with Him; calling passionately that He would come and solve the mystery of his sorrows; hurling reproachful and indignant words at Him for His cowardice in using His omnipotent power to crush a moth; in terms violent and almost blasphemous, citing the omnipotent God to answer at the bar of an outraged and injured man; looking before and behind and about him and proclaiming all in earth and heaven to be impenetrable darkness; and yet, in the midst of all this darkness and confusion, groping his way back to Him, like a child who has fled in tears and anger from a chastening father, sure that He is but simulating, He is still his Redeemer and will yet show Himself to be, will yet return to save him and take him to His heart, will yearn over the work of His hands; and finally, when all his anticipation comes true, restord and blessed, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

No book reveals such tempests of the soul as this of Job, yet throughout it all one is aware that, as the sea in its deep depths is still, however the storm may rage above, so is this man's heart. He is rooted and grounded in God.

The modern Job is a schoolmaster, for who, more than one who has charge of the lives of boys, should be concerned to know whether there is a purpose of good at the heart of the universe or whether all things go at random? 'What is the task of the teacher in the world?' asks Mr. Huss, the Job of Mr. Wells's

book. 'It is the greatest of all human tasks. It is to ensure that Man, Man the Divine, grows in the souls of men.' H. G. Wells was himself, I imagine, a product of an education almost purely utilitarian, the kind that 'thinks of chemistry and physics not as a help to understanding but as a help to trading.' There is much that is suggestive of that basely material attitude in his early books, with their glorification of the machine. But if that was his view once he has travelled beyond it now. 'Before you can prepare boys to play their part in the world you must ask what is the world for which you prepare them; is it tragedy or comedy?' Success is not the chief end of living. Mr. Wells in the person of Huss has seen deeper than once he saw and, as a result, faith, and with faith doubt, have wakened within him. 'If there is no God, no mercy, no human kindliness in the great frame of space and time, if life is a writhing torment, an itch upon one little planet, and the stars away there in the void no more than huge empty flares, signifying nothing, then all the brighter shines the flame of God in my heart. If the God in my heart is no son of any heavenly father then is he Prometheus the rebel; it does not shake my faith that he is the Master for whom I will live and die.'

This is the unlit flame, which, though the winds may blow it about, is undying in the human heart. 'Once it is lit in a man, it is like a consuming fire.' It is something different from the processes of nature, something which the Incarnation signifies, so that this modern novelist may even borrow the ancient cry of his prototype and say, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'

There are pages of this book that are grim and repellent enough. Mr. Wells does not write in any easy, optimistic vein. He can describe the horrows of nature and, with extraordinary skill, the long, slow torment of the German sailor in his submarine. But he does not believe that such things need be. 'Not for ever will the Mocker of Mankind prevail.' '*O ravins*,' cries one of his friends when Huss declares his hope for man, and one is glad indeed to find that H. G. Wells can so rave. 'When a collective will grows plain, there will be no blind thrusting into life, and no blind battle to keep in life, like the battle of a crowd crushed into a *cul-de-sac*, any more. . . . When men cease their internecine war, then and then only can the race sweep forward. All the world will man make a garden for himself. He will rob the atoms of their energy and the depths of space of

their secrets. He will step from star to star as we now step from stone to stone across a stream. . . . . The world is for man, the stars in their courses are for man; if only he will follow the God who calls to him and take the gift God offers.' Isaiah had the same vision, and St. Paul. Is H. G. Wells also among the prophets?

N.M.

PRINTED AT THE S.P.C.K. PRESS, VEPERY, MADRAS—1919

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